

CASE STUDY

APTARE Provides Visibility into Fortune 50 Company's Storage Usage, Saving Money While Delivering Clear Understanding of Where, When and How Storage is Used

Complete Transparency into Storage Environment Enables Chargeback Model and Ensures Utility Storage Billing is Accurate and Fair

After implementing a utility storage model, administrators at a Fortune 50 company realized they lacked the visibility into the storage environment they need to enable accurate capacity planning and chargeback. Furthermore, they couldn't be sure the usage and billing reported by their storage utility company was accurate.

As a result, the company deployed APTARE StorageConsole Capacity Manager to provide a 360 degree view of storage capacity by tier, including internally-owned versus utility-owned as well as by department, application and user. The Fortune 50 company is now able to optimize its disparate storage resources to better meet demand without breaking the bank, and the resulting visibility enables the company to efficiently manage and audit its chargeback program and independently ensure utility storage billing is accurate.

“Throwing Storage at the Problem” Wildly Inefficient

With thousands of global users in a data-intensive industry, a Fortune 50 company knew it needed to get a better handle on its storage environment. The company was gobbling up storage at an incredible rate—it's network growing 30 percent year over year—and the IT organization was implementing a “just throw storage at it” mentality in an effort to ensure data availability and application performance.

In an effort to cut down on hardware costs due to growing storage needs, the company began to rely on storage as a service from a major utility provider, giving it the ability to add storage on demand without having to purchase or manage the infrastructure. Howev-

Customer:

Fortune 50 Company

APTARE Solution:

StorageConsole Capacity Manager

Technology Environment

Storage: EMC DMX & VMAX arrays

Amount of Data Backed Up:

Several Petabytes

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*Rick Clark,
CEO, APTARE*

Key Challenges

- Efficiently manage a storage environment that was growing 30 to 40 percent year over year
- Manage storage chargeback program more accurately and get a better handle on actual storage usage per department, per application and per user for an extremely complex global conglomerate with numerous businesses requiring storage access
- Optimize storage resources to better meet demand without breaking the bank
- Ensure utility storage billing is accurate and timely

Business Results and Technical Benefits

- Complete real-time visibility into storage environment, including capacity, usage and long-term planning
- 7x ROI due to higher utilization rates and optimization
- Ensure utility storage billing is accurate and fair
- Effectively manage 30 percent data growth year over year in a cost-efficient manner
- Improve data accessibility and application performance for users

er, there was no way to tell if the utility's bills were accurate, if the company's storage usage was truly growing or where the growth was occurring from the array, user and application perspectives. Simply put, the company needed to characterize the usage and growth to understand it better and keep its storage utility vendor honest. The company had no realistic way of independently validating the amount of storage it was using versus how much it was being charged, and some suspected that the company was being overcharged. This lack of transparency into storage usage became increasingly expensive and ultimately unsustainable.

"Users were storage hungry, and the storage budget just kept growing and growing," said Rick Clark, CEO of APTARE, a data center optimization company that was tasked with making the company's storage environment more efficient and more transparent. "Unfortunately, administrators had no idea how much storage they were using or even if they were being billed accurately by the utility company."

Getting a handle on how much storage the company needed, how much was allocated and how much was actually being used was a labor-intensive, complex process. Storage administrators had to run a series of scripts that collected information from disparate arrays from EMC, IBM and HP as well as storage procured through the cloud, then manually transfer the data to Excel spreadsheets where they would have to sort by tier. In support of the chargeback policy, administrators would then have to connect users to storage use and bill each department accordingly. As a result of this labor-intensive process, capacity planning was done manually and ad hoc with over-provisioning rampant.

APTARE Centralizes Capacity Management

The Fortune 50 company brought in experts from its existing vendors to try to implement more transparency throughout their storage environment. It wanted a third-party management solution that would provide visibility into usage, streamline the reporting process, enable a chargeback model and provide an independent check on the storage utility. Eventually, the company decided its existing vendors wouldn't be able to provide transparency in an efficient manner and deployed APTARE StorageConsole Capacity Manager, an agentless Web reporting and management solution that provides a 360 degree view of storage capacity from storage arrays, hosts and applications.

"The company was tired of just throwing storage at the problem and decided to tame the beast," Clark said. "We were able to deploy APTARE in a matter of hours, and within a few days administrators were running custom reports that gave them the visibility they needed to accurately track how, where and when storage was used throughout the global company. They truly understood their storage needs and usage for the first time."

Why APTARE?

- Real-time visibility into actual storage usage by tier, including internally-owned versus utility-owned as well as by department, application and user
- Enables third-party validation of billing by storage utility vendor
- Custom reporting that was quickly and easily implemented in a matter of hours not weeks
- Immediate ROI, resulting in the solution paying for itself within six months

Thanks to APTARE StorageConsole Capacity Manager, the Fortune 50 company now has complete visibility into storage allocation and usage across its enormous enterprise storage environment, allowing it to optimize its storage resources to better meet demand without breaking the bank. Dark storage—storage that has been allocated but is not in use—is easily identified and reallocated to other parts of the business, driving down hardware costs while meeting additional demand.

Instead of running dozens of scripts and manually consolidating the data in Excel spreadsheets, APTARE StorageConsole Capacity Manager automatically monitors usage information and consolidates it on a central web-based dashboard where it can be viewed and analyzed by administrators in real time. Usage can be viewed by department, user or application and sorted by tier, cost and whether the storage is corporately-owned or provided by the utility. Chargeback reports are based on 12 tiers of storage using dynamic storage attributes such as replication type, array attributes and business unit.

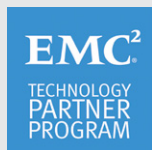
As a result, administrators instantly know how much storage is being used, by whom, the type of storage and how much it is costing the company. A monthly, days-long process is now done automatically and in the background with minimal hands-on administration. It was now time to audit its utility storage vendor to ensure billing was accurate.

Visibility Enables Chargeback Model and Keeps Vendors Honest

The management data provided by APTARE StorageConsole Capacity Manager allows the company to cross-check billing from its storage utility vendor, identifying over-provisioning and over-charging in real time so changes and disputes can be addressed quickly and professionally. As it turns out, the vendor was indeed over-charging, a fact that was backed up by highly-accurate usage data. Corrections were made, and the Fortune 50 company continues to monitor usage in real time to ensure accurate billing each cycle.

The new found visibility into its storage environment also allows the company to deliver storage as a service to its thousands of global users and enables an accurate and efficient chargeback model. The company knows exactly how much storage is allocated, how much is being used and how much it needs in the future. Tiered storage is managed and allocated accordingly, matching performance, security and reliability capabilities directly to mission-critical requirements.

In three years since deploying APTARE, the Fortune 50 company has achieved 7x return on investment from the solution, resulting in millions of dollars in savings while significantly improving storage accessibility and application performance for users. In fact, the APTARE solution paid for itself within six months.



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